

1 1. A graphical user interface for specifying an action to be performed on a field of a  
2 record when a query with which the action is associated returns the record,  
3 the graphical user interface comprising:

4 a window containing a table wherein the field has an entry that is selectable by the  
5 user, the entry including

6 a first field that identifies the field to be acted on; and

7 one or more action fields that, when the user has selected the entry, the  
8 user may set to specify the action.

1 2. The graphical user interface set forth in claim 1 wherein:

2 the identified field's values belong to one of a plurality of types; and

3 the action fields in the entry are determined by the type of the identified field's  
4 values.

1 3. The graphical user interface set forth in claim 2 wherein:

2 the plurality of types include types whose values belong to ordered sets that are  
3 defined in the system in which the graphical user interface is used, types whose values  
4 specify times, and types whose values specify persons.

1 4. The graphical user interface set forth in claim 1 wherein:

2 the user may set the action fields to specify that the identified field be cleared.

1 5. The graphical user interface set forth in claim 1 wherein:  
2 the user may set the action fields to specify a value and to specify that the value  
3 be assigned to the identified field.

1 6. The graphical user interface set forth in claim 1 wherein:  
2 when the field's entry is selected, the user may set the action fields to specify an  
3 operation by which a new value for the identified field may be computed from a current  
4 value which is the identified field's value when the record is returned.

1 7. The graphical user interface set forth in claim 6 wherein:  
2 the field's value belongs to an ordered set of values; and  
3 the user may set the action fields to specify an increment operation wherein the  
4 new value is a value that follows the identified field's current value in the ordered set of  
5 values.

1 8. The graphical user interface set forth in claim 1 wherein:  
2 the identified field may have a null value when the record is returned; and  
3 the user may set the action fields to specify an action that is to be performed when  
4 the identified field has the null value and/or an action that is to be performed when the  
5 identified field does not have the null value.

1 9. The graphical user interface set forth in claim 1 wherein:

2 the user may set the action fields to specify a reference field which is another field  
3 in the record and a reference field operation by which a new value for the identified field  
4 may be computed from a current value of the reference field which is the value that the  
5 reference field has when the record is returned.

1 10. The graphical user interface set forth in claim 9 wherein:

2 the identified field may have a null value when the record is returned; and

3 the user may set the action fields to specify a first reference field and a first  
4 reference field operation is to be performed when the identified field has the null value  
5 and/or a second reference field and a second reference field operation that is to be  
6 performed when the identified field does not have the null value.

1 11. The graphical user interface set forth in claim 9 wherein:

2 the reference field operation assigns the current value of the reference field to the  
3 identified field.

1 12. The graphical user interface set forth in claim 9 wherein:

2 the identified field and the reference field have time values; and

3 the user may further set the action fields to specify an amount of time by which  
4 the reference field's current value is increased or decreased to compute the new value for  
5 the identified field.

1 13. The graphical user interface set forth in claim 12 wherein:

2 the user may further set the action fields to specify the amount of time in one of a  
3 plurality of ways.

1 **14.** The graphical user interface set forth in claim 13 wherein:

2 one of the plurality of ways is days; and

3 when days have been specified, the user may further set the action fields to  
4 specify whether the days will be computed as business days or calendar days.

1 **15.** The graphical user interface set forth in claim 12 wherein:

2 one of the reference fields is a field whose value is always set to the current time  
3 when the query returns the record.

1 **16.** The graphical user interface set forth in claim 1 wherein:

2 the identified field has a person value; and

3 the user may set the action fields to specify a role reference field from which a  
4 new person value for the identified field may be obtained, the role reference field  
5 referring to an ordered set of person values wherein one of the person values is a last-  
6 used person value and the role reference field obtaining the next person value following  
7 the last-used person value at the time the record is returned as the new person value for  
8 the identified field.

1 **17.** The graphical user interface set forth in claim 16 wherein:

2 the user may further set the action fields to specify a person reference field that  
3 has a person value, the identified field being set from the value of the person reference  
4 field when the record is returned.

1 18. The graphical user interface set forth in claim 17 wherein:

2 another action has been specified which assigns the person reference field a value  
3 from a role reference field; and

4 when the record is returned, actions which assign person fields values from roll  
5 reference fields are performed prior to other actions.

1 19. The graphical user interface set forth in claim 16 wherein:

2 the user may further set the action fields to directly specify a person value, the  
3 identified field being set from the directly-specified person value when the record is  
4 returned.